

examined have each seven pairs of ribs, and it seems hardly probable that these specimens, collected at different times and localities, should all be abnormal. The peculiar interest attached to the possession of seven pairs of ribs by a Swift lies in the fact that no known Passerine bird has, normally, more than six pairs of ribs, while such Hummingbirds as have been examined have eight pairs. *Cypseloides* is also peculiar in its skull, as has been pointed out by Dr. Shufeldt, the vomer not being expanded distally as in the other Cypselidæ. The Tree Swifts have a somewhat similar vomer, but these, to my mind, form a separate and well marked family, as set forth in 'The Auk' for January, 1889. — FREDERIC A. LUCAS, *Washington, D. C.*

An Attractive Addition to the Avifauna of the United States.—*Icterus gularis yucatanensis* von Berlepsch.—MR. E. A. McIlhenny recently sent me for identification a skin of a handsome Oriole which proves to be this subspecies and which he kindly presented to the collection of the United States National Museum here. He shot the bird on June 3, 1893, on Avery's Island, New Iberia Parish, Louisiana, from a flock of four; and he writes me that although these birds were quite tame he only shot the one in hopes that the remaining ones would bring others there. His attention was first called to them by their unfamiliar whistle, which is a soft flute-like note expressed by the word 'whae' about as well as anything; this is repeated from time to time as the birds move from limb to limb in search of food. On dissecting the specimen he found a number of small green caterpillars and several spiders, but the principal food seemed to consist of the small purple figs, which were just ripe. While in search of food they move about exactly as the Baltimore Oriole does, swinging from slender twigs head downward, looking under limbs for insects, and moving about continually. He observed the remaining three birds again on June 5 in some fig trees in the plantation garden.

Although this beautiful Oriole may be an irregular, it appears to be sometimes a common summer visitor along the Gulf coast of Louisiana, and less frequently perhaps of Mississippi as well, as the following notes will show; and it seems even probable that it breeds occasionally within our borders. Mr. McIlhenny had already obtained a specimen of this Oriole two years previously and sent me the following extracts, relating to its occurrence, copied from his note-book.

"May 17, 1891. John Goffney brought me today a beautiful bird that he killed in the swamp back of the sugarhouse. It is undoubtedly an Oriole, but one I have never seen before. Owing to the poor condition of the plumage, I did not make a skin of it. The markings are: head, breast, under and upper tail-coverts, orange; wings black with orange markings at their base; back black from base of neck to upper tail-coverts. It is a male, and much larger than the Baltimore Oriole. On dissection the only food found was a few insects and three small caterpillars.

"August 3, 1892. Today I went out to Mr. Herters's rice field to try and get some of the birds I hear feed there. I met J. Mason and induced him

to go with me. We arrived there quite early and saw a flock of about twenty of the birds I was after; they were feeding on the rice in company with Bobolinks and Red-winged Blackbirds. We found them very wild and it was impossible to get a shot. The men who mind the rice told me they sometimes killed a few and they saw some every year in these fields. I went to the house of a negro who had killed some the day before, to see if I could get any, but found they had all been used for food. I saw, however, the heads, wings and feathers of several specimens and think undoubtedly that the birds are the same as the one brought me by John Goffney on May 17 of last year, that is, it is an Oriole I do not know.

"On showing the specimen killed on June 3, 1893, to Mr. Allen Mehle on the 14th of the same month, he told me that a flock of about two hundred of these birds came to his place at Mississippi City, Miss., in July, 1892, and remained there for some time. Numbers of them were killed and several were sent to a taxidermist in New Orleans, but he did not know his name. He is positive it is the same bird, and as no one knew what they were, he had some mounted."

In his letter of Sept. 12, 1893, Mr. McIlhenny writes me also as follows: "I showed the skin, before I sent it to you, to Captain Jim Hare of the Trinity Shoal lightship, and he told me that two birds of exactly the same appearance had struck the light and had been killed this spring in April. His ship is sixty miles out to sea and due south of here. Capt. Hare tells me that he often sees large flocks of small birds flying high in the air during their migrations."

From the foregoing it will be seen that this Oriole cannot be regarded as simply a straggler, and it is only surprising that it has been overlooked so long.—CHARLES E. BENDIRE, *Washington, D. C.*

Behavior of a Summer Tanager.—I send the following item which my friend, Rev. Boniface Verheyen, of St. Benedict's College, Atchison, Kansas, communicated to me a short time ago.

"... I want to tell you about the peculiar conduct of a Summer Tanager (*Piranga rubra*) which a number of the professors witnessed daily for several weeks. It was during the last week of May that the bird first began to attract attention. He would be seen to fly from window to window on the north side of the west wing of the College, or perch on the sill, facing inward, as if peering through the window. Every few moments he would make an attack on the pane with his bill, as if he were trying to get at something or force his way through. When driven from one window he would fly to another. His attacks were at times quite vicious: he would fly from a neighboring tree directly for the window and strike the pane with a whack. Time and again he attracted my attention in my room, though the door was shut. Several times I took my stand directly in front of the closed window within a few feet of him and watched him closely at his seeming mad effort to peck holes through the pane. He did not seem to care much whether I stood there or not. I opened one of the windows on several occasions to see if he would come in, but he did